

Public Information Statement
National Weather Service Albany NY
800 AM EDT Fri May 5, 2017

...Severe Weather Awareness Week Continues...

Today the focus is on flash flooding.

Flash flooding is a rapid rise, typically within six hours, of water along a stream or in a low lying urban area. During the summer, the most common cause of flash flooding is downpours associated with thunderstorms. However, flash floods can also result from dam breaks and heavy rain from tropical storms. Flash flooding is meant to imply the threat is urgent.

Eastern New York and western New England are particularly susceptible to flash floods because of topography. Heavy rain falling on steep terrain creates an ideal situation as water rapidly moves down steep hill sides. Sometimes steep hill sides get so water logged that they slip and mud slides or debris flows occur. Flash flooding presents a threat to the urban motorist too. Underpasses can fill rapidly with water. Driving into a flooded underpass can quickly put you in five or six feet of water. In 2011, Tropical Storm Irene and the remnants of Tropical Storm Lee brought widespread flash flooding to the region.

Flash flooding can be deadly. Never underestimate the power of water. Half of all flash flood related deaths occur in automobiles. Two feet of flowing water will cause most cars to float. Flooding hazards are increased at night when visibility is reduced. The National Weather Service urges you to respect all barriers that warn of flooded roads. Turn around, don't drown.

Those with interests along rivers, creeks and streams should remain alert for flash flooding. Campers are particularly at risk. A normally placid stream can swell to a 10 foot deep raging river in less than an hour if thunderstorm downpours inundate an area upstream. Remember, six inches of flowing water is often enough to knock a person off their feet. When outdoors, keep alert for, muddy rapidly rising streams, or a loud roaring sound upstream. If observed, head for higher ground immediately.

NOAA Weather Radio offers one way to receive immediate relay of flash flood warnings. Many local television and radio stations also broadcast weather alerts. Computers and wireless devices can receive warnings. National weather service flash flood warnings are relayed as wireless emergency alerts to newer phones by FEMA.

For more information on Severe Weather Awareness Week...go to our web site www.weather.gov.

Tomorrow we conclude Severe Weather Awareness Week with a look back at the key points concerning severe weather.

NWS Albany Staff